



## PRESS RELEASE

# Baker-Polito Administration Celebrates Ribbon Cutting Ceremony of Berkshire Innovation Center

Life sciences hub to drive job creation, entrepreneurial activity and outside investment in Western Massachusetts

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Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development

Office of Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito

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**PITTSFIELD** — Today, Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito joined state and local officials for the ribbon cutting ceremony on the \$13.7 million Berkshire Innovation Center (BIC), which will catalyze and accelerate innovation and growth of new

and existing companies and spur economic growth, job creation, retention and investment in Western Massachusetts. Governor Baker and Lt. Governor Polito were joined by Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy, MassDevelopment President & CEO Lauren Liss, Pittsfield Mayor Linda Tyler, members of the state legislative delegation and Berkshire County business, education and community leaders to celebrate the grand opening of the life sciences innovation hub.

“Facilities like the Berkshire Innovation Center are what sets Massachusetts apart, ensuring that cities and towns across the Commonwealth experience the benefits of the state’s thriving life sciences sector,” **said Governor Baker.** “Our administration has been proud to make a nearly \$12.5 million commitment to BIC’s development, and leverage the partnerships necessary to make this state-of-the-art facility a reality as it enables and accelerates growth and success of small and medium-sized companies.”

“Today we cut the ribbon on a new economic engine for the Berkshires that will create jobs, support an innovative business environment, and train and retain a skilled workforce,” **said Lt. Governor Polito.** “The state’s investments in Pittsfield continue to strengthen our regional collaboration efforts in education, science and technology as we support area students, employers and employees.”

The BIC will provide advanced capabilities to manufacturers in the Berkshires, primarily small and medium-sized companies in life sciences, the life sciences supply chain, advanced manufacturing and technology. The 22,500 square-foot facility includes a Rapid Prototyping Lab featuring cutting-edge 3D printing capabilities, a 2,000 square-foot Tech Arena offering precision inspection and reverse engineering services, and a Simulation Lab allowing companies to utilize cutting-edge techniques in both training and testing using virtual and augmented reality technologies. The facility also houses a biotech lab, auditorium, conference rooms and hi-tech classrooms, and other incubator and accelerator space for member companies.

The Baker-Polito Administration has committed nearly \$12.5 million towards the project through a \$12 million allocation from the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center and the approval of \$450,000 from MassDevelopment. This funding leverages an additional \$1

million commitment from the City of Pittsfield and \$300,000 from the Pittsfield Economic Development Authority.

“As an incubator for new ideas, a center of learning, and a facility for local startups to catapult ideas from concept to product, the BIC represents the Commonwealth’s support for an innovative business environment to help companies grow,” **said Secretary Kennealy**. “Together we are opening the doors to state-of-the-art facilities like these, building on the unique Massachusetts formula that encourages success, brings people together, and addresses opportunities and challenges around housing, business competitiveness, and workforce each region deserves.”

“We are pleased to see the completion of the Berkshire Innovation Center which will support local Massachusetts companies that are at the forefront of technological advancements,” **said Secretary for Administration and Finance Michael J. Heffernan**. “By providing technological resources, innovation support, and state-of-the-art capabilities, the Berkshire Innovation Center will promote local economic growth and development throughout the region.”

“The Berkshire Innovation Center at the William Stanley Business Park in Pittsfield is a testament to the power of great ideas,” **said Pittsfield Mayor Linda Tyer**. “It is a symbol of sheer determination and earnest collaboration among so many who believed in its ability to create a pipeline of highly trained employees in the Berkshires. The Berkshire Innovation Center will forever change the landscape for advanced manufacturing R&D and we’re deeply proud to know that this groundbreaking work will happen right here in our great city.”

“This strategic investment creates a vibrant center of gravity for an exciting economic environment in the region. It is a signal of the pivot from GE to a new alignment for the city and the region,” **said Senator Adam Hinds**.

“Today is a culmination of a lot of work by a lot of people,” **said Representative Tricia Farley-Bouvier**. “State and local officials and business interests came together and brought their resources to a project that is greater than the sum of its parts. It is also the

beginning of something transformative for the Berkshires. The BIC is not just brick and mortar; it is a place and a concept to bring people together to support innovation in business, and indeed, the future of work.”

The ribbon cutting builds upon ongoing efforts by BIC officials and its partners in the region to provide a catalyst to accelerate the innovation and growth of existing companies in the Berkshire Region. This includes:

- A **\$200,000 Skills Capital Grant** (</news/baker-polito-administration-awards-146-million-in-skills-capital-grants-to-educational>) for the purchase a large format open source 3D printer, boosting the prototyping and training capabilities at the BIC
- A \$50,000 grant from the Feigenbaum Foundation, which has a significant history in supporting organizations located in or providing primary benefits to the Berkshires region
- Hosting an *Innovating for the Future* event this August, in partnership with General Dynamics, expected to draw hundreds to the region and further connect General Dynamics with the local industrial sector
- Mill Town Capital expanding its operations to the BIC, in addition to serving as an on-site venture capital partner to BIC member companies
- A multi-year commitment from MountainOne as a Sponsor and Associate Member of the BIC, a strategic investment facilitating new high-growth programming at the BIC, including the establishment of the MountainOne Pavilion at the facility
- The launch of the Berkshire Technical Talent Accelerator (BETA) to ensure the Berkshires has the technical talent required to drive business growth and leverage the region’s network of colleges and universities to align the technical training needed now and into the future
- In collaboration with BIC members VidMob and General Dynamics, the BIC will launch *Girls Who Code* chapter as part of the national effort close the gender gap in tech-related fields

- Alira Health has committed to expand its Acceleration Office Hours program to include the members of the BIC, deploying its team of strategists, consultants, bankers, and scientists to provide analysis, recommendations, and strategy across the product and business lifecycle

"Today we officially open our doors to this amazing new facility," **said BIC Executive Director Ben Sosne.** "Already, it is serving as an intersection point for engineers, educators, and thought leaders who are seizing the opportunities of tomorrow, and who are eager to solve the challenges that our generation and future generations will be faced with. The evolutionary pace of technology is staggering. These changes translate into a range of opportunities and disruptions across every industry. The Berkshire Innovation Center is a home where our community can congregate to navigate these changes and position ourselves to be leaders in the industries of tomorrow."

"I am so excited for this day to finally be here and for the entire community to see what is happening here in this building," **said BIC Chairman Stephen Boyd.** "It is a snapshot of what's possible — amazing people and fresh ideas springing forward from entrepreneurs, teachers, designers, tinkerers, and technologists — they're all here. Thought-leaders and aspiring rising stars are already doing more together within this open canvas to flood our area with opportunities and growth."

As the BIC opens its doors, its team is encouraged by the surge of new member companies that have joined the BIC, including Lenco Armored Vehicles, SolaBlock, VidMob, Electro Magnetic Applications (EMA), Neenah Performance Materials, Dive Technologies, and Rousselet Robatel. The BIC now has **20 member companies and 10 academic partners** (<https://berkshireinnovationcenter.com/community>).

With the support of the City of Pittsfield, BIC Member EMA recently announced its plans to install a state-of-the-art aerospace testing chamber at the BIC this year. The company has also partnered with Williams College faculty to build a course taking real world applied mathematics problems that EMA faces on a daily basis, and provide students with the ability to work on solving these problems. This will not only expose students to the industry, but will require them to rely heavily on non-traditional problem solving skills in

addition to the mathematics involved in these areas.

“The Life Sciences Center remains committed to supporting the growth and development of the life sciences throughout Massachusetts,” **said Massachusetts Life Sciences Center Interim President and CEO Timothy McGourthy.** “The Berkshire Innovation Center is a key piece to achieving our shared goal in enabling Western Massachusetts to leverage and increase the output of its regional strengths.”

Also taking place this week was the Berkshire Manufacturing Innovation Challenge, organized by North Adams-based startup incubator Lever, Inc. The manufacturing innovation challenge and similar Lever-led programming received financial support from a mix of state, private, and non-profit sources, which includes funding from the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center and the MassTech Collaborative. Additionally, the recently launched [Massachusetts Life Sciences Center Seed Fund](http://www.masslifesciences.com/programs/seedfund/) (<http://www.masslifesciences.com/programs/seedfund/>) aims to seed innovative and promising life science companies in targeted geographies, including Pittsfield.

“The Berkshire Innovation Center will be an economic driver in Western Massachusetts by offering the space, equipment, and resources to help manufacturing companies grow,” **said MassDevelopment President & CEO Lauren Liss.** “MassDevelopment was pleased to help bring the BIC and its home, the William Stanley Business Park, to life with resources from the Advanced Manufacturing Futures Program and the Brownfields Redevelopment Fund.”

Numerous civic, economic, and educational stakeholders joined in the chorus of praise to celebrate the grand opening of the BIC:

“Today is an historic day for the City of Pittsfield and PEDDA is proud of its role in the more than nine year effort that has resulted in today’s celebration of the Berkshire Innovation Center” **said Corydon Thurston, Executive Director of the Pittsfield Economic Development Authority.** “This is an investment that will support the growth of our existing industry and manufacturing sector and act as a catalyst for startups in the life sciences and advanced manufacturing. The BIC will be a stimulus for jobs and economic

growth for the City and Berkshire County and PEDDA is proud of its role in the birth of a new innovation economy in the Berkshires.”

“UMass Amherst and the Institute for Applied Life Sciences (IALS) welcome the opening of the BIC as a sibling organization established to be a regional catalyst for innovation and industry partnerships. I look forward to a close working relationship between IALS and the BIC to facilitate the growth of Western Massachusetts companies. We are in discussions on providing industry access to extensive equipment resources and also to providing well-trained graduates to the region,” **said Peter Reinhart, Founding Director of IALS and recently appointed Board member of the BIC.**

“Berkshire Community College and a variety of academic partners have been on board with the vision and mission of the Berkshire Innovation Center from the beginning – and we are thrilled to see aspirations realized,” **said Ellen Kennedy, President of Berkshire Community College.** “The BIC will spur much needed, meaningful job growth in the county – and through its educational partnerships with BCC – we will be able to better align the needs of cutting edge manufacturing, and the Life Sciences industry with the curriculum taught in our classrooms to provide a well-trained workforce, ready to jump-start their careers in the Berkshires.”

“The Berkshire Innovation Center is a model for collaborative innovation and workforce development for small manufacturers and startups in life sciences, the life science’s supply chain, advanced manufacturing, and technology,” **said McCann Technical School Superintendent James Brosnan.** “We believe that by preparing our students for advanced manufacturing and exposing them to opportunities at local and regional advanced manufacturers we are creating mutually beneficial opportunities for BIC member companies and our students. These connections will be key to sustaining a vibrant advanced manufacturing sector in the Berkshire regional economy. Having the ability for our students to access the innovative and creative programs at the BIC will expose them to career opportunities not available to any other vocational students within the Commonwealth.”

“General Dynamics is a proud supporter of the Berkshire Innovation Center,” **said Carlo**

**Zaffanella, vice president and general manager at General Dynamics Mission Systems.** “I am personally delighted to see it come to life, and truly inspired to imagine what it can do for Berkshire technologists in the future. The ongoing success of high-tech businesses like General Dynamics demands that we find ways to attract, inspire and retain innovative talent, and that we give large and small businesses a forum to share ideas. The BIC is just such a place. With the passion of the Berkshires community behind it, I am confident that the BIC will be an ongoing catalyst for great ideas and inspiring innovation, and will be another cog in the wheel of positive evolution for Berkshire County.”

“Partnering with the Berkshire Innovation Center has given us the opportunity to deliver a facility that inspires and cultivates innovation and entrepreneurship in the Berkshires,” **said Anthony Consigli, CEO, Consigli Construction Co., Inc., which led the construction of the BIC.** “We’re excited to see the spirit of collaboration continue as the building’s end-users make it their own.”

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### **About the Berkshire Innovation Center**

The Berkshire Innovation Center will provide a catalyst to accelerate the innovation and growth of existing companies in the Berkshire Region — primarily small to medium sized manufacturing companies (SME’s) in Life Sciences and the Life Sciences Supply Chain — with the ultimate objective of spurring economic growth, jobs, and investment in the region. The BIC will provide advanced capabilities to its member companies including shared access to cutting-edge research and development, prototyping equipment, customized training programs, student internship programs and collaborative opportunities with the BIC’s research and education partners.

### **About the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center**

The **Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC)** (<http://www.masslifesciences.com/>) is an economic development investment agency dedicated to supporting the growth and development of the life sciences in Massachusetts, home to the most verdant and productive life sciences ecosystem in the world. Through public-private funding initiatives, the MLSC supports innovation, education, research and development, commercialization,



and manufacturing activities in the fields of biopharma, medical device, diagnostics and digital health. Since its creation in 2007, the MLSC has strategically deployed over \$700 million in Massachusetts, through a combination of grants, loans, capital infrastructure investments, tax incentives and workforce programs. These investments have created thousands of jobs and propelled the development of new therapies, devices and scientific advancements that are improving patient health and well-being in Massachusetts and beyond.

## About MassDevelopment

**MassDevelopment** (<https://www.massdevelopment.com/>), the state's finance and development agency, works with businesses, nonprofits, banks, and communities to stimulate economic growth. During FY2019, MassDevelopment financed or managed 316 projects generating investment of more than \$2 billion in the Massachusetts economy. These projects are estimated to create or support 9,743 jobs and build or preserve 1,992 housing units.

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## Office of Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito

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